

The Christian News-Letter

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SOME READERS OF THE NEWS-LETTER will remember that eighteen months ago the Christian Frontier Council sponsored a three-day meeting of some twenty-five people whose work it is to deal with young people as they come from school into industry. A second group of about twenty people met and covered the same ground a few days later. The main object of this exchange was to see whether an educationist, mainly concerned with the effect on young people of going from school to work, and reflecting on these effects out of a Christian view of, and concern for, persons, could help to throw any light on the problem of handling young people which nearly all industrialists find themselves confronting at this present time. Both the News-Letter Supplement by Dr. Reeves (C.N-L. No. 265) and the report of these conferences percolated to some unlikely corners and aroused interest. At the beginning of the year a different fifty, most of them either managers or education officers within industry, met at the Y.M.C.A. College at Broadstairs under Sir Wilfrid Garrett's chairmanship and with Dr. Marjorie Reeves as the chief speaker pursued the matter further.

It is a fact of considerable importance that many managers (all of whom have more than enough on their hands with a

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By

H. A. HODGES

production drive of great urgency) are turning their attention, as many of them are, to these human problems, particularly as they relate to the young worker. They are asking now, not only what conditions in a factory or what sums in a pay packet will induce people to work, also about the work itself, whether it provides human satisfactions, whether those engaged upon it see, or can be helped to see, some social usefulness in it. They are asking too what kind of person makes a good worker. Is it the person with the wide or the narrow range of interests, the developed or the undeveloped personality?

These are not questions which can be answered by industrialists on their own. They are questions on which a good educationist has much to say and on which a Christian who has made some attempt to see a connection between the Christian view of personality and the problems of modern industry may humbly insert a word.

But not only is the fact that these questions are being discussed of interest—the context of their discussion is interesting too. In America the education of young workers in industry is regarded by many firms as a form of technical know-how and many of those who have experimented in education within industry are not prepared to disclose their ideas outside their firms. Here the atmosphere is different: there is a far keener awareness that these industrial problems are the nation's problems, that the question of men's attitude to their work is a very great factor in national recovery, and all light from all quarters is needed on it. Present also in the attitude of many managers to young people is the awareness of the enhanced prestige and authority of the Ministry of Education. That part of the Fisher Act which after the first world war provided for part time education of young people in industry was made a dead letter by the determination of industrialists to get cheap labour and of parents to get earnings. A few large firms with enough foresight and enough capital set up their own schools for technical and general education or co-operated with the Local Education Authority in providing them. In 1939 4,000 young people were being regularly released from industry for a whole

or part of a day per week for education. The figure now, in spite of the difficulties, is 140,000. A great variety of education is going forward either within industry or between industry and the Local Education Authority. The Ministry cannot be thwarted as the old Board of Education was, and when it is said that there will be county colleges as soon as they can be built and staffed and that young people will have to go to them the fact is believed, accepted and even welcomed.

The door for co-operation between industry and education is now more wide open than it has ever been before. The obvious form of co-operation is the efficient dovetailing of county colleges with what is being done for the education of young people in industry. But that is a largely organizational matter. The nation's need is for the full, intelligent and willing co-operation of every person in the effort to build the nation's life on new foundations. If ultimately how people work depends on what sort of persons they are and what their total view of life is, industry cannot make those persons. Most industrialists admit this limitation and many of them are inclined to blame the educationist for failing to produce the right kind of people. The reply of the educationist to this charge is usually that if he could have young people till they were eighteen, he could make a better job of things, and that anyway he is tired of seeing young people leaving school eager to work hard and to enjoy their work and to find them in a few weeks' time cynical, browned off, seeking an easy way out of every situation by work-dodging and responsibility-dodging devices. The contention that Dr. Reeves is advancing with such skill and such force is that even if the educationist had full charge of his young people till they were eighteen or twenty-eight, they would still not be rounded and completed persons because they would lack an essential *educational* experience, the experience of going into a real job and submitting to the discipline of doing it and of being very small fry in an adult world. A quite alarming number of things in the nation's future may depend on how far both in the factory and in the school industrialists and educationists

can combine their skill, experience and goodwill for the making of more fully developed and understanding persons and help to bring back purposefulness, integrity and responsibility in work.

THE TRIAL OF GERMAN PHYSICIANS AT NUREMBERG

A few months ago twenty-three Germans were tried before an American Military Tribunal at Nuremberg for their part in medical experiments on Jews, Poles, Russians and others in German concentration camps. Of the twenty-three, twenty were doctors holding high ranking positions under the Nazi regime. Seven of the twenty-three were acquitted, seven were sentenced to death, five to life imprisonment and four to prison terms ranging from ten to twenty years. Among the experiments which were performed in these camps were exposure to high altitudes in low pressure chambers, to freezing and to sea water, experiments involving deliberate infections of spotted fever, malaria and epidemic jaundice, the deliberate infliction of burns and wounds with mustard gas and phosphorus, the introduction of poison into food, the removal of bone, muscles and nerves and experiments in sterilization.¹

The blatancy of these experiments, the refinements of cruelty which accompanied them and the large number of persons involved have already shocked civilized opinion. The question what should be done with the results of these experiments has been sharply debated in the medical profession. Some have already been used. The Americans, for example, made immediate use of captured records of the effects and treatment of prolonged exposure to freezing to save the lives of American soldiers suffering from exposure. Some of the evidence has no scientific value, some of it is still being examined. Two main points of view have been expressed. Some would have liked to see a bonfire made of all the records and have argued that no use ought to be made of knowledge gained by such atrocious means: others have maintained that since the lives of these victims are irretrievably lost and no burning of the books can reduce the

¹ From the Journal of the American Medical Association.

torment they endured, the saving of the lives of others, made possible by their sufferings, is a not unfitting memorial of them. On a Christian view of suffering—and perhaps only on a Christian view—the sufferings of the victims can be turned to redemptive ends without exculpating those who inflicted them.

The other question raised by these trials is the place of experiment on human persons in the acquisition of medical knowledge. No matter what is done in the laboratory, somebody has to be the first human being to swallow a drug or to test an inoculation. Somewhere there is a borderline between legitimate and illegitimate experiment, between justifiable and unjustifiable risk. The Nuremberg tribunal had to try to define this line and to give verbal expression to certain basic principles. These included (1) voluntary consent of the human subject; (2) the results for the good of society should be unprocurable by other means and the experiments should not be random; (3) the anticipated results must justify performance; (4) all unnecessary physical and mental suffering and injury must be avoided; (5) no experiment should be conducted in which there is *a priori* reason to believe that death or disabling injury will occur; (6) the risk involved must not outweigh the advantage expected; (7) during the experiments the human subject should be at liberty to, and the experimenting scientist must be prepared to, terminate the experiment at any stage.

The case against the defendants was clear enough. There was not a single instance of voluntary submission to, or permitted withdrawal from, these experiments. Many were conducted by unqualified persons in shocking conditions. In every one of the experiments the subjects experienced extreme pain, resulting in nearly all cases in permanent injury, mutilation or death. There was a complete disregard for international conventions and for the general principles of criminal law embodied in the criminal laws of all civilized nations. That even twenty members of a profession devoted to the service of humanity should have stooped to these depths is a sobering reflection.

Modern scientific medical knowledge is an instrument of immense power. Society's chief protection from the frightening possibilities of abuse is not the criminal law, which might deal more easily with flagrant abuses than with borderline cases. It is in the enduring tradition within the medical profession, which not only honours the saving and preserving of life, but resists the temptation (present in all ages in different forms) to regard one human life as less precious than another. Once theories of race and blood, or any other theories which break up the solidarity of humanity, find a place in the outlook of medical men, experimentation on the inferior for the sake of the superior becomes a very powerful temptation. Most of the great discoveries in medical science have been made by men who believed that their own lives were the rightful subjects of their experiments and whose skill and integrity evoked in many instances the willing co-operation of others.

In the present battle royal over the Health Service the Government is standing for the principle that the benefits of medical knowledge must be for all and not just for those who can pay for them. The doctors, on the other hand, are asserting among other things the same principle—the right of the medical profession to maintain in the public interest the highest standards of knowledge and efficiency. The onlooker, bewildered by the violence of the struggle, may well ask whether the object of it has not been lost sight of in the heat of battle.

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN YUGOSLAVIA

It is not easy to obtain information of what is going on in Eastern Europe.

News that comes *via* the World Council of Churches from a correspondent in Yugoslavia is therefore welcome, sketchy as it is. The Serbian Orthodox Patriarchal Church suffered very badly under the occupation. Three bishops and many priests were killed, two thousand churches were destroyed. Under the new regime the Church has been separated from the State, and the effect of agrarian reform has been to compel the Church to give up practically all its

property. Yet, churches have never been as full as they are to-day. The clergy are being supported entirely by the members of their congregations. Daily services are held morning and evening in all churches. Preaching does not come under any State censorship.

Reorganization is going ahead. Six new bishops have been consecrated, three new bishoprics created and strenuous efforts are being made to fill up the depleted ranks of the priesthood. The Theological Faculty in Belgrade and the two colleges for priests in Belgrade and Prizren are fully working. There are at present 125 students in the Theological Faculty of Belgrade, which remains part of the University and has been renewed in part by state contributions. The correspondent writes that in many instances professors have sacrificed part of their own salaries in order to help promising students to continue their studies.

Terrible destruction of books, including the complete destruction of the library of the Theological Faculty in Belgrade, has led to a famine in Christian literature.

THE SUPPLEMENT

In the first number of the C.N-L. this year (No. 302), about which we have had a number of letters from readers, for which we are very grateful, we said that in our view the most perturbing thing about the time we live in is its *atheism*, an atheism both of thought and of practice. We suggested that over against this Christians have to set a faith which is not just a few useful pointers for personal living but a view of the world, a framework for thinking about all that is or happens around us, and that they have to make that faith visible and intelligible to others. At the same time they have to have their eyes open for significant turnings-away from the opposite view among non-Christian contemporaries.

We make a beginning on the first of these tasks with a Supplement in this issue by Professor H. A. Hodges, who sets in contrast the Christian and the materialist views of the world which contend with each other in the minds of most

thoughtful people and are often so confused together that they are not recognized. Here he states the contrast and in further Supplements he will attempt that elucidation of the forms and attitudes of imagination and thought distinctive of the Christian mind and the Christian view of the world which he here says is an essential task of Christian thinking to-day.

This considerable task which Professor Hodges has undertaken, for which we are much in his debt, is not for him just an academic essay. He himself says that he is as a Christian under a necessity to articulate as clearly as he can what difference belief in Christ makes to his way of looking at the world. The *form* of the thinking Professor Hodges is undertaking derives from his being a philosopher, the *necessity* to undertake it comes from his being a Christian. But while it is the business of philosophers to talk of things as a whole, and the gift of this particular one that he can do so in a way that makes a lack of philosophical training no bar to understanding in the reader, Professor Hodges would be the first to deny any suggestion that the enfeebled witness of the Church in our day can be restored to strength solely by the work of Christian philosophers. True, they have a central task to perform which, when done, will help all the rest of us with our own. But what Professor Hodges will have to say in the course of several Supplements needs to be illuminated by the experience of those engaged in the work of the Christian ministry and in secular activities—what difference does belief in Christ mean to their way of looking on the world? We hope that readers will participate in the discussion, with a view to making it as varied and as profitable as possible.

Kathleen Bliss

CHRISTIANITY AND THE MODERN WORLD VIEW—I

By H. A. HODGES

HOW CAN WE TALK TO MODERN MAN ABOUT GOD?

THOSE who really believe in God cannot help thinking and speaking of Him. If He has graciously allowed us to know something of Himself, we cannot help trying to let others know as much. All real belief is prone to evangelize. This holds good without reference to place or date, it is true everywhere and always. But just as the question of Christian action becomes significant only when it is made concrete and has specific reference to our own time and the present social system, so the question of Christian evangelism, and of the thinking about the Faith which must precede and govern it, needs to be given a similar concrete reference. It is only when it is so treated that it ceases to be an edifying generalization, and becomes a question of immediate urgency. *In the present intellectual situation* what is, or should be, Christian thinking and teaching?

What situation in particular do I mean? I mean the common intellectual atmosphere, the prevailing ideas and attitudes, the things which the average man takes for granted and the questions which he is interested in seeing answered. These things have a background, of course, both in the history of thought as such, and in those wider perspectives where ideas and social conditions interact. In both spheres the chief influence has been and is that of science, pure and applied, which has taken for its motto "Knowledge is power", and illustrated it so well in its own way that it has become the standard by which all claims to knowledge and truth are judged. Both in the sphere of theoretical enquiry and in that of technical application it has reached results which flatter the power impulses in man, suggesting that there is no secret which we cannot unveil and no force which we cannot harness. The industrial system, which is the direct outcome of applied science, has had the same effect, causing us to regard the material world as a subject for exploitation, and making competition the normal relation between individuals and groups. The cult of power has affected very deeply the ideals and moral

standards of the people, as a score of popular advertisements bear witness.

In a world like this, it is inevitable that religion should not be at the hub of things. It survives, and is often able to make some sort of a show of influence, but it is an influence which cannot operate on the levels where the really determinative decisions are made. The Church lives on as an institution, venerable for its antiquity, woven into the habits of the people, and continuing to function by the sheer inertia of tradition. Among its members, and among a large section of the outside public, it maintains by its very existence the habit of certain emotional attitudes and the profession of certain standards which are sometimes revered as embodying an ideal which we recognize but cannot reach, and sometimes jeered at as a dream which cannot come to terms with the facts of life. There is also the social function of the Church as a club, sometimes exploited and used as an advertisement by the Church itself. In short, the Church survives partly by habit and partly because it serves purposes extrinsic to its own essence.

How do we, who profess full adherence to the Christian Faith and make a serious attempt to practise it, appear in the eyes of those who do not? To some we appear inexplicably blind, and they wonder how we can live in the same world as they, with the same resources of knowledge and criticism, and (as they kindly admit) with a respectable degree of intelligence, and yet avoid the conclusions which are so clear to them. We seem to them to be living anachronisms; cf. Trotsky's remarks about the Pope, who is modern enough and enlightened enough to know and use the wireless, but uses it for the hopelessly anachronistic purpose of broadcasting his blessing *urbi et orbi*. They may go further and suspect that our blindness is pathological, like a friend of mine who, on the occasion of my conversion, took a course of reading in Freud in the hope of discovering what was the matter with me. Or again they may go yet further and regard our blindness as deliberate, as the expression of a hostility to the progress of knowledge and freedom.

And how do we appear to ourselves? We cannot take ourselves for granted so thoroughly as never to make comparisons between ourselves and the non-Christians who surround us.

Christian preachers and writers often affect to pity the non-Christian. It is he who is blind, and his blindness may be traced, as he traces ours, to pathological reasons or even to an underlying hostility—in this case a hostility to God and to self-knowledge or discipline. By contrast with him we are the clear-sighted people, the people who are able to weigh evidence impartially, and are free enough from prejudice to see the truth about life and the world. I doubt whether even the man in the pew has really this somewhat complacent conception of himself; and we, who belong to the Christian intelligentsia, do we think of ourselves in this way? Are we sure that our failure to agree with our contemporaries is not sometimes due to a failure to understand them, and that there is not in us a blindness comparable with that which we are taught to discern in them? It is a thought which will not let itself be stifled.

TWO OUTLOOKS IN CONFLICT

I remember the wife of a Professor of Physics explaining to me her husband's attitude to religious questions. He and she were both active and undoubting Anglo-Catholics; but he, so she said, was content to take his Anglo-Catholicism on trust. As he would expect anyone who was not a physicist to respect his opinion on a matter of physics, so, being himself no priest, he considered it reasonable to take the opinion of a priest, as of an expert, in religious matters. The argument would have had more force if ministers of religion had been as little apt to disagree on fundamentals as physicists; yet I suppose it might still be argued that, however little a minister's opinion might be worth, it was worth more than that of a physicist. Then she went on to ask whether I took the same view, or whether I tried to find a common ground on which my religion and my philosophy could meet. The question was of course ridiculous. A physicist's religion may perhaps be cut off with a hatchet from his physics, but a philosopher's cannot from his philosophy. There could be only one answer: I have never ceased to seek a ground of unity between the two.

If the physicist had analysed the situation fully, he would perhaps have come to the same position himself. For his physics was a branch of that scientific activity which has domi-

nated the thought and life of modern times, and makes them so different from the thought and life of the age in which Christianity was born. Behind the activity of the individual physicist stands the scientific attitude of mind, with its distinctive distribution of emphases and its distinctive presuppositions—in short, a whole outlook on life and the world. Christianity is also such an outlook. It is no secret to anyone that there is a strain between these two ways of looking at the world. Anyone who was alive to the real issues of life might well find himself driven to come to terms with this tension within himself. Unless he does, he is not one man, but two.

The same holds good, in truth, for him and for me and for all of us, at least those of us who are not ministers of religion. For each of us there is a duality of our work in the world and our Christianity; for each of us our work in the world is part and parcel of the modern order of things; for each of us, therefore, the duality of work and religion is more than a duality, it is a tension. And we cannot act responsibly, as unified personalities, unless the tension is in principle overcome. Here is our problem. Our non-Christian friends ask in bewilderment "How can you do it?" Precisely: how can we do it?

There are two obvious temptations which consist in not facing the tension at all, but running away from it. The one is to let our Christianity go, or at least to force it into the framework of the modern system of ideas at whatever cost to itself. That was the error of the modernists, and I shall say no more here about that. The other temptation is to let the other side of ourselves go, to hark back to an earlier age when the intellectual atmosphere was, or seems to us now to have been, more congenial to Christianity, and to dwell spiritually in that age. This is the way which has been taken by many people concerned in the Catholic revival of the last century: archaism in church architecture and decoration, in vestments and ceremonial, in the content of their theology, in their philosophical background, together with a critique upon the Renaissance and the Reformation and the Industrial Revolution which not merely pointed out their many errors and weaknesses, but wrote them off altogether as a perversity from which we must now recover and start again as before. This is a hopeless line to take in any case, because it

is impossible to undo what has been done. But it is also wrong, and amounts to an implicit atheism, or at least to a heresy which denies God's lordship over history.

THE FUNCTION OF PHILOSOPHY

It is to deal with situations like this that philosophy has been called into being. Philosophers are to the intellect what psychoanalysts are to the emotional and appetitive life. They are needed because there are conflicts, not only in people's desires and feelings, but also in their presuppositions and principles, which give rise to incoherences in thought and life. Slight incoherences need not worry anyone, but incoherences in first principles and fundamental attitudes, if neglected, may avenge themselves terribly. A philosopher's business is to look for symptoms of such conflicts, and to work back by epistemological analysis toward their causes. His weapon is the twofold question: What do you mean? and How do you know? which he turns upon every statement made in the field where a conflict is suspected. And people react in three ways. They may ignore him and refuse to examine themselves. Or they may yield to his questioning, and a weakly-held conviction may collapse under his assault and leave a blank. (It was for producing this effect that Socrates died.) Or a deeply-rooted conviction in a vigorous mind may be purged and strengthened, its meaning clarified and its grounds made visible; and this is what the philosopher hopes will happen, the result he works for.

If we apply this to our present problem, it will appear that we need a philosophic enquiry into the real meaning of the contending ways of looking at the world, their fundamental presuppositions and principles, and the grounds on which these rest. But one half of this task is already accomplished for us by the patient labour of modern philosophy. For this is just what modern philosophy is about. It came into play at the time when the new scientific method was struggling to establish itself in a world which had been brought up to think along quite other lines. The scientific workers found themselves asking a new kind of question, answering it by a new method with rather different assumptions from what had been customary, and so revealing a different sort of universe. An issue arose between traditional

metaphysics and new science, and the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the age in which the issue was fought out. Whatever mistakes may have been made in detail by Kant and his successors, the essentials of their work stand firm. They made clear in outline what the first principles of the modern scientific outlook are, and where their strength lies. The scientific mind sets out to deal with events in time and space. Its ambition is to correlate them within a framework of general laws, allowing of prediction, which shall cover all observable facts with the minimum of assumptions. It is found that the categories of the traditional metaphysics are unnecessary for this purpose, and therefore stand condemned by Ockham's razor ; and the final outcome is a view of the world which wavers between idealism and positivism—two philosophies more intimately related than appears on the surface.

The foundations of the modern outlook have thus been subjected to analysis already in the way we have in mind. Our task is thus halved. All that we have to do is to apply the same kind of analysis to our belief in God and Christ. I shall be told that this too has already been done, that the question of the possibility of theological knowledge was as much a standing problem in the mediaeval philosophies as that of the possibility of scientific knowledge is in the modern ones. It was so ; but it was the question of the possibility of theological knowledge in a world indelibly tinged with metaphysical ideas and prejudices. The points from which the mediaevals start in their account of theological thinking include some which have been gravely shaken by what has happened since their time. And therefore their solutions will not stand to-day, at least without a very thorough overhaul. For us, as I said earlier, the problem is that of Christian thinking to-day, and it is a problem to be approached with open minds.

What is urgently needed is an enquiry into the forms or attitudes of imagination and thought which are distinctive of the religious, and specifically of the Christian mind, on the assumption that these will differ from the forms of imagination and thought which underlie other and competing systems of ideas. It is a contribution to logic, in the broadest sense of that term and it might be called *The Logic of Christian Thinking*. There

is plenty of work to be done in this field before the religious consciousness shall have been as well analysed as the scientific consciousness, and only then can the issue between the two be seen for what it is.

We Christians of to-day are on both sides of the cleft. We are modern people, which means not merely that we live in this year and not five centuries ago, but also that we take an active part in the work and life of that society whose mind is dominated by scientific ideas and whose living conditions are determined by industry. But we are also Christians, members of an institution which stays in the organism of present-day society like a foreign body, inheriting a tradition whose relevance to life is less and less obvious, and talking among ourselves a language unintelligible to the non-Christians who surround us. They know that we are Christians, in the sense of knowing that we belong to this institution, and talk this strange language, but they do not know what we mean by it, and for various reasons we are not making them see it. Our Christianity is not something which our non-Christian contemporaries have seen and rejected. They have never seen it. We have failed to make it visible to them in the first place. Or sometimes a few of them get a glimpse of it from afar, but find that they cannot understand what they see. Or they understand, or think they do, but yet fail to be interested. One hears of people saying that they see what we mean, but find it irrelevant or a bore.

Our problem is, therefore, in the first instance that of making Christianity visible again, of making people see it as a really possible way of looking at things. Secondly, we have to try to make it intelligible, so that anyone who sees it as a vision may be able to assure himself that it is not a mirage. The first is a poet's business, and the second is a philosopher's. Both are concerned in the third task which faces us, viz. to make it appear desirable; to discover and draw out those impulses in humanity which it is meant to satisfy, so that the relevance and the excellence of it may be felt. Are we sure that it is now as visible, intelligible, and obviously desirable even to ourselves as it ought to be?

One may suffer from a division of consciousness and not know it. In that case one is not unaffected by the evil, but its

effect is felt as an emotional state, an uneasiness, a restlessness, an inhibition and indecision which makes action ineffective. Is this the condition of the Church to-day? And when in the natural course of things the division threatens to make itself conscious, in order that it may be recognized and healed, we may, either face it, or shirk it in the interests of self-esteem and comfort. To shirk it means refusing to admit the truth about ourselves, painting a complacent picture of our own state, and ascribing the evil which is the cause of our trouble to someone else. The result of this is continued discontent, sterility, and a growing loss of contact with reality.

If the harder way is taken, and the division of consciousness is not denied but accepted as a fact, we have a course equally uncomfortable, but less sterile. It is a course of patient self-examination in the presence of God, in which first of all our misconceptions will be purged away, and then the truth can be vouchsafed to us. We shall have to ask ourselves over and over again questions of the following kind: What do we mean by "God"? What do we mean by "believing in God"? What is it that we do when we say we "believe"? Why do we do it? Why cannot we help doing it? How do we differ from those who cannot do it? When they ask us by what right we do it, what is our answer? How far do we share their attitude to things called secular? And so on. We must ask these questions and subject every answer to careful examination, so that the merely conventional, or traditional, or reassuring formulae may be detected and rejected, and the real issue be seen as it is. There is no way to the truth except through this purgation, and the purgation may take long. It may be the destiny of this generation of the Church to enter into a real dark night of the intellect, and go through the experience of being forsaken by our false gods before we are shown the face of the true God. But the true God is Himself the darkness, and our ignorance, when we face it, is the beginning of knowledge.

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